

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 have been examined. Applicants are canceling claims 6, 7, 15 and 16. Applicants are amending the specification and claims 1-5, 8 and 10. No new matter has been introduced and support for the amended claim can be found in the specification. MPEP §706.03(o)(8th Edition).

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim to foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a) - (d) and further for acknowledging receipt of all certified copies of the priority documents. Applicants also thank the Examiner for accepting the original drawings and considering all the references cited in PTO Form 1449, submitted with Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 28, 2000.

This Amendment is believed to be fully responsive to each rejection raised by the Examiner in the non-final Office action dated January 16, 2003. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claims 3 and 12 (incorrectly citing claims 3 and 10) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Applicants assume that the Examiner meant to include claim 12 in this rejection since claim 12 depends on claim 3.

The Examiner alleges that in claim 3, the phrase "for displaying kinds of the information" is confusing and unclear. Applicants have amended claim 3 and deleted this phrase from claim

3. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 3 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4-11 and 13-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,140,939 (hereinafter Flick), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,078,265 (hereinafter Bonder). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The vehicle key system of claim 1 includes a transmitter. The transmitter of the present invention includes an identifier storage means for storing an identifier specific to said transmitter.

The Examiner acknowledges that Flick does not disclose that the allegedly corresponding transmitting means transmits the claimed system-specific identifier and that the allegedly corresponding verification means does not verify the received system-specific identifier against a previously stored identifier. However, the Examiner alleges that Bonder cures these deficiencies, citing to col. 4, lines 5-9; col. 5, lines 19-49; col. 6, lines 19-39; and Figure 4. Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the following reasons.

Col. 5, lines 19-62 of Bonder describes a programming device 20 which is used to initialize data stored in the key or changes in the data. Bonder describes that a Personal Identification Number (PIN) could be required to allow security of the programming operation. (See in particular col. 5, lines 25-32 and 42-48).

On its face, the PIN described in Bonder fails to correspond to the identifier specific to the transmitter that is stored in the identifier storage means of the transmitter.

Col. 4, lines 5-9, col. 6, lines 18-39 and Figure 4 of Bonder describe and illustrate the internal components of the intelligent key 11. The intelligent key 11 includes a RAM memory 44 that stores a user database. The user database includes biometric data 44A and user profile identification data 44B, such as time access to the automobile.

The RAM memory 44 and user profile identification data 44B fails to correspond to the claimed identifier storage means that stores an identifier specific to the transmitter. In the present invention, identifier relates to specifying the transmitter not the user. The identifier of the transmitter of the present invention is patentably distinct from the user profile data of Bonder.

For at least these reasons, Flick and Bonder, individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the identifier storage means that stores the identifier specific to the transmitter of the present invention. Furthermore, since Flick and Bonder, individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the claimed identifier and storage means, the remaining aspects of the receiver, verification means and control means of claim 1 can not be taught or suggested.

Additionally, the transmitter of claim 1 can transmit only the fingerprint information, only the identifier, or both the fingerprint information and the identifier. Applicants note that a similar limitation was originally recited in claim 2. The Examiner alleges that the over-ride switch 14 of Bonder corresponds to this aspect of Applicants' vehicle system, citing to col. 4, lines 9-18. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Flick and Bonder, individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest that only the system-specific identifier can be transmitted.

For at least these reasons, Flick and Bonder, individually or in combination, fail to render obvious the vehicle key system of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn. Claims 2, 4, 5, 8-11, 13, 14 and 17-19 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency, as well as reciting their own patentably distinct features.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 3 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Flick, in view of Bonder, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,990,803 (hereinafter Park). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Park fails to cure the deficiencies of Flick and Bonder with respect to claim 1, as presented above. Flick, Bonder and Park, individually or in combination, fail to render obvious the vehicle key system of claim 1. Claims 3 and 12 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/649,097

Attorney Docket No. Q60517
Art Unit 2635

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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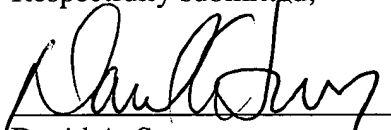
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Date: April 2, 2003

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The specification is changed as follows:

Page 4, first full paragraph:

Preferably, the transmitter includes a displaying unit for displaying ~~kinds of the~~
information selected by the transmission information selecting unit.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 6, 7, 15, 16 are canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A vehicle key system for verifying identity of fingerprint information about a user's fingerprint and for controlling pieces of equipment in a vehicle according to a verification result, said system comprising:

a transmitter including a fingerprint information capturing means for capturing fingerprint information from a user's fingerprint, an identifier storage means for storing an identifier specific to said transmitter, and a transmitting means for transmitting only the fingerprint information captured by said fingerprint information capturing means, only together

~~with a system-specific identifier previously stored in said identifier storage means, or both the fingerprint information and the system-specific identifier; and~~

a receiver disposed in the vehicle, including a receiving means for receiving the fingerprint information and the identifier transmitted from said transmitting means of said transmitter,

a verification means for verifying the received fingerprint information against a list of pieces of previously stored fingerprint information, and for verifying the received identifier against a previously stored identifier, and

a control means for controlling said pieces of equipment in the vehicle according to verification results from said verification means.

2. (Amended) A vehicle key system for ~~verifying identity of fingerprint information about a user's fingerprint and for controlling pieces of equipment in a vehicle according to a verification result, said system comprising:~~according to Claim 1, wherein

~~a transmitter including a fingerprint information capturing means for capturing fingerprint information from a user's fingerprint, and a transmitting means for transmitting information including at least one of the fingerprint information captured by said fingerprint information capturing means and a system specific identifier;~~

~~a receiver disposed in the vehicle, including a receiving means for receiving the information from said transmitting means of said transmitter, as~~aid verification means

comprising feature verification means for, when the received information includes the captured fingerprint information, verifying the features extracted from the fingerprint information received from said transmitter against features of an authorized user stored by said receiver, the received fingerprint information against a list of pieces of previously stored fingerprint information, and for, when the received information includes the system specific identifier, verifying the received identifier against a previously stored identifier, and a control means for controlling said pieces of equipment in the vehicle according to at least a verification result from said verification means;

an identifier verification means for verifying the specific identifier received from said transmitter and the specific identifier stored by said receiver, and

comprehensively determining means for determining whether or not a user manipulating said transmitter is an authorized user and whether or not the manipulation is directed toward the vehicle corresponding to said transmitter

a transmission information selecting means for selecting, as the information to be transmitted by said transmitting means, only the fingerprint information, only the system specific identifier, and both of them, according to a manipulation performed by the user.

3. (Amended) The vehicle key system according to ~~Claim 2~~Claim 1, wherein said transmitter includes a display means for displaying kinds of the information selected by said ~~transmission information selecting means~~control means comprising engine control means for

controlling an engine according to the verification result from said receiver, door control means for controlling a lock of doors according to the verification results from said receiver, and a trunk control means for controlling a lock of a trunk according to the verification result of the receiver.

4. (Amended) The vehicle key system according to Claim 21, wherein said ~~transmission information selecting means includes an operation means that is manipulated by the user when selecting the information to be transmitted by said transmitting means of said transmitter, and wherein said transmitter further comprises a selection information holding means for holding selection information indicating the selected information, and said receiver further comprises a selection information holding means for holding selection information indicating the selected information~~ receiver further comprising:

a first operation means for selecting only the fingerprint information, only the identifier or the both of them according to a manipulation performed by a user,

a first verification data-selection state storage means for storing the verification data-selection state indicating a selection state of the verification data whose value is set by said first operation means and a selection state of the verification data received by said transmitter, and

a display means for displaying which information to be verified is selected from the fingerprint information or the identifier selected.

5. (Amended) The vehicle key system according to Claim 4, wherein said transmitter ~~includes~~further comprising:

said a second operation means for selecting only the fingerprint information, only the identifier or the both of them according to a manipulation performed by a user, and

a second verification data-selection state storage means for storing the verification data-selection state indicating a selection state of the verification data whose value is set by said first operation means and a selection state of the verification data received by said transmitter.

8. (Amended) The vehicle key system according to Claim 4, wherein an operation unit intended for operating a piece of equipment disposed in said vehicle also serves as said first operation means.

10. (Amended) The vehicle key system according to Claim 4, wherein a pedal disposed in said vehicle also serves as said first operation means.